AIPAC LITE - P4 • FIGHTING FOR TRANS KIDS - P7 • RUCKER PARK HOOPS - P14

THE INDYPENDENT
294 MARCH/APRIL 2025

DAVID HOLLENBACH

CUOMO'S COMEBACK

DOES NEW YORK CITY REALLY NEED THE DISGRACED FORMER GOVERNOR?

BY JOHN TARLETON — P9

THE INDYPENDENT

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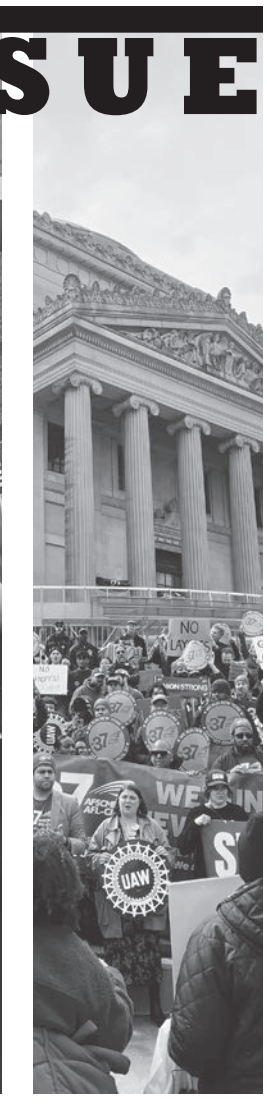

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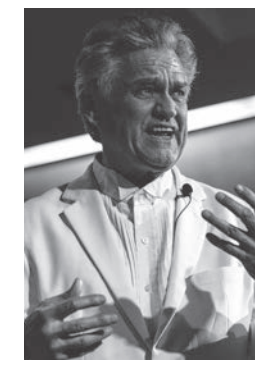

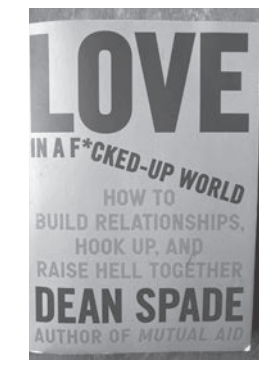

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NYC BRIEFS

BY INDYPENDENT STAFF

NEIL CONSTANTINE

1ST AMENDMENT AT RISK: *Mahmoud Khali's supporters demand his release at a March 10 rally in Lower Manhattan.*

MAHMOUD KHALIL DETENTION SPARKS UPROAR

As *The Indypendent* goes to press, protesters have taken to the streets of New York City for three consecutive days to demand the release of Mahmoud Khalil, a pro-Palestine student protester who graduated from Columbia University in December. On March 8, he was detained by ICE in the hallway of his university-owned student housing. A federal judge blocked Khalil's deportation after he was sent to a detention facility in Louisiana as President Trump promises a national crackdown on visa holders who protest Israel. Khalil is a permanent legal resident who has a green card. His detention has been widely denounced as a threat to freedom of speech. On March 11, more than 1.7 million people had signed a petition demanding Khalil's immediate release, and 30 New York elected officials had signed a letter to DHS calling for the same.

TESLA TAKEDOWN ROLLS ON

More than 300 protesters shut down a Tesla auto dealership in Manhattan's upscale Meatpacking District March 8, with six arrested for occupying the showroom. Tesla CEO Elon Musk "bought his power at the expense of the American people," one woman said while being handcuffed. The multibillionaire has presided over more than 60,000 federal workers being fired, often illegally, in Donald Trump's decimation of public services. The demonstration was one of scores of "Tesla Takedown" protests nationwide, from major cities to smaller places such as Decatur, Georgia, and Waterville, Maine. Meanwhile, Tesla's stock price dropped by more than one-third, from $351 a share on Feb. 9 to $230 on March 10. Its U.S. sales in February were 6% lower than in February 2024. Its sales in Germany in February, after Musk endorsed the neo-Nazi Alliance for Deutschland party, were down 76% from the previous year.

STATE PRISON GUARD STRIKE ENDS; 2,000 FIRED

A 22-day wildcat strike by 13,000 state corrections officers ended after 2,000 were fired, state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Commissioner Daniel F. Martuscello III announced March 10. The department had reached a deal over the weekend with the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, and warned that officers would be axed if they didn't return to work that morning. The deal temporarily suspends some provisions of a 2021 law limiting solitary confinement, and caps guards' shifts at 12 hours. More than 6,000 National Guard troops staffed prisons during the strike, and at least seven inmates died, including a 22-year-old man at Mid-State Correctional Facility in Marcy. Other prisoners told *The New York Times* that he had been beaten to death by an emergency-response team.

Amy Goodman | Juan González | Nermeen Shaikh

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THE INDYPENDENT *March/April 2025*

AIPAC LITE TARGETS SHAHANA HANIF

PRO-ISRAEL GROUP INTERVENES IN PARK SLOPE COUNCIL RACE

PHOTO BY WILLIAM ALATRISTE/NYC COUNCIL MEDIA UNIT

PROGRESSIVE STALWART: *Councilmember Shahana Hanif (D-Brooklyn) outside City Hall.*

By Theodore Hamm

"Antisemitic lies" are spreading throughout the City Council race in Park Slope through Kensington. Or at least that is what challenger Maya Kornberg claimed in early March.

Kornberg, who is Jewish, is trying to unseat Shahana Hanif, a pioneering Muslim officeholder. The falsehood Kornberg denounced is that she is AIPAC's preferred candidate in the race.

While it is true that AIPAC has not backed Kornberg, the group focuses on congressional races. In 2024, an entity called Solidarity PAC formed to support pro-Israel elected officials in local New York races. Kornberg is one of seven 2025 candidates currently endorsed by Solidarity PAC.

According to city campaign finance records, Kornberg has received four-figure contributions from some of Solidarity PAC's leading funders, including Adeena Rosen and Alice Tisch. High-profile Israel backers including billionaires Leonard Blavatnik and Daniel Loeb have similarly helped fill Kornberg's campaign coffers.

Blavatnik and Loeb reportedly pressured the Adams administration to send in the NYPD to clear out the Gaza solidarity encampment at Columbia University last spring. Fabien Levy, an Adams deputy mayor, denounced *The Washington Post*'s story about that effort as "antisemitic."

As *The New York Times* reported in 2022, Loeb was a key player in the creation of the New York Solidarity Network, which was intended to "act something like a local" version of AIPAC. Solidarity PAC is an outgrowth of the Solidarity Network. The PAC's website does not offer any specific reasons why Hanif has not served the district well since taking office in 2022.

Jewish voters in Park Slope are far from a monolithic bloc. Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, a leading source of pro-Gaza protests, has a significant number of members in the district. The Jewish Voice, the group's endorsement arm, announced its backing for Hanif in late February.

Meanwhile, as of her January filing, Kornberg's campaign records showed a total of 22 four-figure donations (most have been for the $1,050 maximum allowed in council races). Only one came from a Brooklyn resident.

■ ■ ■

In her statement blasting the "smear campaign" linking her to AIPAC, Kornberg stressed that her rationale for running "is and has always been … focused [on] local issues" including affordability, education, healthcare and equality. Almost all of the "priorities" listed on Kornberg's campaign website match those found on Hanif's site.

Kornberg makes a passing criticism of Hanif's previous support for the "defund the police" movement. "Defund," of course, never happened — nor did the diversion of some NYPD resources to mental health interventions ever materialize. It seems unlikely that Kornberg's reactionary anti-defund stance will get much traction in a very liberal district.

Kornberg grew up in northern California. Her father, Roger Kornberg, is a distinguished professor of chemistry at Stanford, which Maya attended as an undergrad. Hanif was born and raised in Kensington by Bangladeshi immigrants.

During her first term, Hanif spearheaded passage of landmark city legislation known as a "Bill of Rights for Immigrant Workers." It provides workers with information about their workplace protections regardless of immigration status. As of March 10, Kornberg's website pays minimal attention to immigrant concerns.

Kornberg, who works for the Brennan Center at NYU, has the support of two longstanding local political clubs, the Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats (CBID) and the Independent Neighborhood Democrats. In 2023, Kornberg was a member of the CBID executive committee. Her most vocal champion, District Leader Doug Schneider, has been an influential member of the CBID.

In the 2021 primary race to succeed Brad Lander for the greater Park Slope council seat, Schneider finished a distant fourth, tallying 14% on the first ballot. Backed by Lander, in whose office she worked, Hanif took home 32%.

Schneider's feed on X is a relentless stream of attacks on Hanif. His wife, lawyer Joni Kletter, is the founder of "Park Slope's Jewish Affinity Group," a Facebook forum with over 1,260 members. The invite-only group is not exactly full of Hanif enthusiasts.

In addition to Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, the New Kings Democrats have announced their support for Hanif's reelection bid.

There's an adage in New York City politics: "Hell hath no fury like a scorned district leader." Okay, maybe that's not an old saying. But in this campaign, it surely applies.

PALESTINE LAND GRAB COMES TO BROOKLYN

AMBA GUERGUEIAN

SPEAKING OUT: *Palestinians and Jews protest on Feb.18 against the sale of land on the West Bank to Israeli settlers.*

By Amba Guerguerian

On Feb. 18, in a Jewish section of the Borough Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, an event by The Getter Group promoted the sale of Palestinian land to prospective Israeli settlers. The slogan on the company's website reads, "Israel is your home: Buy like you were born here."

Outside the event on 14th Avenue, the struggle over the future of the West Bank took an ugly turn as Palestinian protesters came under attack from Zionist counter-protesters while the NYPD watched.

In one video from the protest, a man with an Israeli flag tied around him punches a woman wearing a keffiyeh. The police tell him to back up, briefly hold onto his jacket, then let him go. Throughout, Zionists yelled "terrorists out of here!" with one man shouting, "I'll set your Quran on fire!"

Also caught on video was a Zionist with a metal stick lunging at pro-Palestine protesters, a gallon of water being poured out of the sixth story of the building where the land sale took place, and protesters being chased by counter-protesters on their way to and from the protest. A mob of dozens threw objects at, banged on, and tried to pull the driver out of a vehicle full of pro-Palestine protesters, according to PAL-Awda NY/NJ, the group that organized the demonstration, after the protest.

Malik Hassan of the Muslim American Society youth center in Brooklyn described another incident: "While we were making our way back to our car, we saw our Jewish allies from Neturei Karta getting harassed by the Zionists in that neighborhood. At that moment, MAS youth came, intervened, and created a circle around our anti-Zionist Jewish allies to protect them." Zionists then began to attack the MAS members, according to Hassan, who said the police did little to stop them. He told *The Indypendent* that two MAS youth had to go to the emergency room afterward. One needed staples to close a long cut on his head, and the other had cuts and bruises on his face. Throughout the incident, the Zionists were making "Islamaphobic and anti-Palestinian racist remarks. This was a hate crime," says Hassan.

This was not the first time Zionist counter-protesters have become violent at land-sale events. The Essex County Prosecutor's Office filed charges against two men who in November caused severe injuries when they attacked a pro-Palestine protester during a West Orange, N.J., rally against a sale of Palestinian land co-organized by PAL-Awda NY/NJ and American Muslims for Palestine-NJ.

At the "stolen land" action PAL-Awda NY/NJ held prior to the Feb. 18 one, Zionists "jumped a couple of people and stole someone's bike. They've been violent in the past, but this is the most violence by far we've seen," says Mohamed, a PAL-Awda NY/NJ organizer who asked to be identified by first name only.

The Feb. 18 counter-protest was organized by Betar, a far-right Zionist group that has recently received attention for its death threats against prominent advocates for Palestine and for its work to get pro-Palestine visa holders deported, as detailed in a Feb. 6 report by *The Intercept*'s Jonah Valdez.

■ ■ ■

Palestinian land-sale protester Rich Siegel told Al Jazeera in January that he once went undercover to a real estate event in Woodmere, Long Island, in the basement of a synagogue.

"We pretended to be interested in a home in a condominium in a West Bank settlement," said Siegel on the Al Jazeera podcast *The Take*. "People who are defending these events are saying that the real estate isn't actually for sale — it's just information that's being given. In my experience, they're being sold at the point where we could have signed on the dotted line."

There have been protests against these real estate events since at least 2007, when there was a demonstration in Teaneck, N.J., organized by Siegel.

The Palestinian Assembly for Liberation-Awda (PAL-Awda NY/NJ) is a Bay Ridge-based group that promotes Palestinians' right to return to Palestine. It launched a campaign against the events, which it says are illegal, in the fall of 2023.

The land expos are held by a variety of real estate companies almost exclusively based in Israel that target U.S., Canadian and European Jews, marketing "anglo" neighborhoods in occupied Palestine. In addition to The Getter Group, other real estate companies include CapitIL, My Israel Home, and Home in Israel. Their events have mostly been protested in New York and New Jersey, but there have also been protests in Los Angeles, Baltimore and Toronto.

It is unclear how long the expos have been taking place, but illegal settlement of the West Bank and East Jerusalem has been ongoing since Israel seized the territories from Jordan in its 1967 war against the countries surrounding it. As of 2023, there were just under 700,000 Israeli settlers, according to the Israeli group Peace Now. Far-right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich presented a two-year plan to bring 500,000 more settlers to the West Bank in 2023. In January, he took new measures to ensure the acceleration of illegal settlements.

The construction of settlements entails the violent dispossession of Palestinians' homes, farmland

Continued on page 13

BROOKLYN MUSEUM WALKS BACK LAYOFFS

FELIPE JIMENEZ

STANDING TOGETHER: *Members of DC 37 Local 1502 and UAW Local 2110 rally outside the Brooklyn Museum in opposition to proposed layoffs.*

By Felipe Jimenez

On Feb. 25, when the Brooklyn Museum held a gala to celebrate its 200th anniversary, its workers formed a picket line outside to protest impending job cuts. Wealthy patrons in evening gowns and tuxedos made their way past hundreds of museum employees, fellow union members and workers from other Brooklyn institutions rallying in solidarity.

"Most of us could work at any cultural institution, but we choose to work here," Liz St. George, an assistant curator of decorative arts who was one of the 47 workers slated to lose their jobs, told the crowd. "I do it because of the people I work with, and I'm here today standing shoulder to shoulder with you, fighting for no layoffs."

Late on the night of March 9, the day the layoffs were supposed to begin, the museum reached an agreement with the workers' two unions, District Council 37 Local 1502 and United Auto Workers Local 2110, to offer "a voluntary separation package" instead. The package offers those who quit three weeks' severance pay for every year of service, a letter of recommendation from management and COBRA health insurance paid for by the museum for up to four months. (To keep coverage after that, they would have to pay the full premium themselves.)

The 47 workers — nearly 10% of the staff of over 500 — have until March 19 to take the offer.

"We secured an agreement that is fair and results in no layoffs for our members," DC 37 Executive Director Henry Garrido said in the union's announcement. "We will continue pushing for sustainable funding for the city's cultural institutions."

The planned layoffs were announced on Feb. 7, with curators, conservators, security guards, assistants and retail staff on the list. The museum cited a $10 million budget deficit, with Director Anne Pasternak framing the layoffs as an unfortunate but necessary measure to keep the institution financially stable.

Museum workers saw it differently. They pointed to mismanagement and lavish spending — millions of dollars spent on rebranding, costly renovations, outside consultants, and a brand-new restaurant — while staff remained overworked and underpaid over the past two years. The museum's decision to move forward with layoffs without consulting the unions only further inflamed tensions.

"Our members are paying the price for the mistakes of management," said Local 2110 Organizing Director Maida Rosenstein, who led the charge in 2021 to unionize museum staff that were not already covered by DC 37.

On Feb. 5, museum leadership contacted the two unions to inform them of the cuts but withheld the list of affected employees. The following morning, the unions held an emergency meeting. Management publicly confirmed the layoffs in an all-staff meeting.

Union leadership accused the museum of violating its contract by not negotiating before announcing the layoffs.

"The contract clearly states that before the museum can implement a layoff, the museum must negotiate with the union," said Local 1502 President Wilson Souffrant. "The contract goes further and says the union must agree to the layoffs. So the museum broke the contract by not letting the union know that they're going to be laid off."

Museum spokesperson Danielle Villaluna told *The Indypendent* that management was just asking "that union leadership come to the table in good-faith bargaining that recognizes the realities of the museum's financial outlook and the economic landscape in which we are operating."

Management insisted that salary cuts were unavoidable. Workers and union leaders presented alternative proposals — including furloughs, voluntary buyouts and salary reductions for higher-paid staff — but said museum leadership had resisted considering them.

Workers also expressed concern about how reductions in the workforce would affect the museum's operations and safety. One worker, speaking anonymously for fear of reprisal, questioned how the elaborate upcoming *Arts of Africa* exhibition could be safely put together with fewer workers.

A Feb. 28 special oversight hearing by the City Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor put further pressure on the museum. Although Brooklyn Museum workers are not city employees, the City Department of Cultural Affairs provides $10.5 million to the institution — around 20% of the museum's operating budget and half of the DC 37 workers' salaries.

Both union leaders and museum workers testified. Council members stressed that the museum had not exhausted all avenues before laying off workers. They also questioned why city-funded institutions were not required to submit financial contingency plans before implementing layoffs. Councilmember Carmen De La Rosa (D-Manhattan) pressed Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo on whether the agency had any role in ensuring staff retention before funding institutions.

"We don't take into account staff reductions when we are funding the institution," Cumbo admitted.

DC 37's Henry Garrido criticized the museum's rush to lay off workers before exhausting possible alternatives.

"The budget process ends in June," he told the committee. "If we have the best possible intention to address the financial problems of the museum, why would you make the layoffs effective March 9? Even if the City Council didn't put up all the money — if we had a way to reduce that $10 million deficit to, say, six — then maybe you didn't have to lay off 47 people. Maybe you could have reduced it to 20, and then we could have worked to turn that 20 to zero."

No museum leadership attended the hearing.

On March 6, hundreds of demonstrators again gathered in front of the museum, chanting "People power; union power!" and holding signs that read "Built by museum workers" and "Abuse of power comes as no surprise."

Although union leaders remained defiant, some workers feared that Trump Administration policies might enable management to get away with refusing to compromise. Souffrant noted that Trump had fired pro-labor National Labor Relations Board member Gwynne Wilcox, leaving the five-member board without a quorum to issue orders in disputed cases. (On March 6, a federal judge ruled that Wilcox must be reinstated.)

In the end, it was union pressure — bolstered by city scrutiny, media coverage, and public outcry — that forced the museum to reconsider. It's not immediately clear, however, if the city will provide more funding. In a cultural sector where job security is increasingly precarious, this fight has underscored a deeper struggle over power, priorities, and the future of labor in New York City's arts institutions.

FIGHTING THE TRANS CARE SCARE

AS NYC'S PRIVATE HOSPITALS CAVE TO WHITE HOUSE EDICT, THE PUBLIC HOLDS THEM ACCOUNTABLE

GARY MARTIN

By Eva Moschitto

Less than 48 hours after NYU Langone canceled gender-affirming care appointments for two trans children, over one thousand protesters, including doctors, parents, students and teachers, showed up at the Upper East Side hospital for an action organized by the Democratic Socialists of America.

Five days later, several thousand people gathered in Union Square for a "Rise Up for Trans Youth" rally organized by Transformative Schools, Act Up NY and the Gender Liberation Movement.

Attorney General Letitia James sent a letter reminding health care providers of their obligation to comply with state anti-discrimination laws, "regardless of the availability of federal funding."

The letter references a Jan. 28 executive order deceitfully titled Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation, which threatens to withhold Medicare and Medicaid funding for hospitals that provide gender-affirming care to people under age 19.

However, due to a temporary restraining order blocking the freeze of federal funds, "funding to institutions that provide gender-affirming care continues to be available, irrespective of President Trump's recent Executive Order," according to an amicus brief filed on Feb. 21 by 18 attorneys general, including James.

The executive order "rescinds funding only where the gender-affirming care is offered to an individual whose 'identity ... differs from his or her sex.' People who are cisgender remain free to receive the exact same treatments, including to better 'align [their] physical appearance' with their gender identity," the brief states.

Gender-affirming care includes providing puberty blockers, hormones and, in rare instances, surgery — most commonly breast reductions. A 2024 Harvard study found "little to no utilization of gender-affirming surgeries by transgender and gender-diverse" minors in the United States.

"Withholding the availability of services from transgender individuals based on their gender identity or their diagnosis of gender dysphoria, while offering such services to cisgender individuals, is discrimination under New York law," James writes in her letter.

Delaying or suspending gender-affirming care can be dangerous. "Adolescents who begin gender-affirming treatment at later stages of puberty are five times more likely to be diagnosed with depression and four times more likely to have anxiety disorders than adolescents who seek treatment in early puberty," according to a 2020 study by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Odds of "severe psychological distress [were reduced] by 222%, 153% and 81% for those who began hormones in early adolescence, late adolescence and adulthood, respectively," a 2022 Stanford study found.

AAP's gender-affirming care model states that "variations in gender identity and expression are normal aspects of human diversity … If a mental health issue exists, it most often stems from stigma and negative experiences rather than being intrinsic to the child."

Following Trump's inauguration, The Trevor Project saw a 46% rise in demand for its crisis counseling services, and a 700% overall increase since the election. Purporting to "End Reliance on Junk Science," the Jan. 28 executive order dismisses research by the AAP and numerous other leading medical associations supporting gender-affirming care.

Continued on next page

PRIVATE HOSPITAL EMPIRES

According to a 2022 report from the Lown Institute, many New York hospitals receive more money in tax breaks – exemptions from federal and state corporate income tax (including investment income), property tax, state and local sales tax, and tax-exempt charitable donations – than they give back in the form of free and discounted care and investments in community health. This is called a "fair share deficit."

Fair share deficits can threaten community well-being by diverting tax dollars away from public programs and into private income. "Given the large body of research showing the importance of social factors like education, financial security, and housing security on health, there is a concern that too many tax dollars going to hospitals may actually make communities less healthy," the report states.

According to the Lown Institute, NYU Langone had a fair share deficit of $167 million in 2019. NY-Presbyterian had the largest deficit, at $359 million, and Mount Sinai was third with $98 million.

In its 2025 Quarterly report, NYU Langone listed a $2.7 billion contribution to "community benefits." $1.8 billion of this total comes from "charity care" via "governmental payors," or treatment for patients on Medicare or Medicaid. $662 million is allocated to physician training and research.

The Lown Institute does not count research, training or Medicaid shortfall – the "difference between the cost of hospital care and what Medicaid pays" – as charitable because research and training "do not have a direct and meaningful impact on community health…[and] hospitals already make up for the [Medicaid] shortfall by charging private insurers more or by receiving Disproportionate Share Hospital payments."

Despite claiming to lose $1.8 billion to "charity care" for two thirds of its patients who rely on Medicaid and Medicare, NYU Langone generated $1.3 billion in net income in 2023. $104 million came from untaxed investment income. Over $41 million of revenue went to executive compensation, with CEO Robert Grossman earning $8.8 million.

– EVA MOSCHITTO

BROOKLYN FOR PEACE

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for a series of thought-provoking events featuring renowned artists, authors and historians exploring themes of activism, history, and community.

Monday, April 21, 6:30 PM – Carl Hallberg premiers his one person play: "A Performed Lecture on Gardening, Neighborliness, and John Brown" through storytelling, puppetry, and song.

Wednesday, May 14, 6:30 PM – Greg Grandin Book Talk, Moderated by Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now*: Pulitzer Prize-winning historian discusses *American, America,* a sweeping five-century history of the Western Hemisphere.

Wednesday, June 11, 6:30 PM – Sarah Schulman Book Talk: Acclaimed author explores solidarity's power and complexities in *The Fantasy and Necessity of Solidarity*.

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BROOKLYN FOR PEACE

TRANS CARE SCARE

Continued from previous page

"Expanding support and offering the very best care for our LGBTQ+ patients and families has remained a top priority," said Michelle Lloyd, vice president of children's services at the Sala Institute for Child and Family Centered Care, in a 2022 press release by NYU Langone. The press release's title advertised NYU Langone as a 10-time "National LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader," recognized by the Human Rights Campaign.

The press release is posted on the Hassenfeld Children's Hospital Transgender Youth Health Program website, above a different link to an article titled "CBS News: Gender-Affirming Care Is Lifesaving Care."

"Hospital CEOs know just as we all do that this decision [to suspend care] is not based on what's best for patients," remarked Daniel Goulden, a Brooklyn teacher and organizer who spoke during a Feb. 18 mass call for trans rights organized by the New York DSA.

"Everyone who is on this call and feeling really freaked out … I feel you … but we have literally thousands of people standing with us … if we mobilize that power, and if we concentrate it strategically, we can win," Goulden continued.

Since the Feb. 3 protest, volunteers have sent approximately 100,000 letters to board members, trustees and executive leadership at NYU Langone, Mount Sinai and New York Presbyterian hospitals, Goulden shared. The letters urged hospitals to immediately resume gender-affirming care for minors, and reminded that executive orders "do not have the authority to override the U.S. Constitution, federal statutes and established legal precedent."

"We expect [providers] to go to the Supreme Court … first, before violating our laws and values, before throwing children out of care that they deserve and need," said Michael Kinnucan, senior health policy advisor at the Fiscal Policy Institute, who also spoke on the call.

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez (D-Queens/Brooklyn/Manhattan) explained the letter writing as part of an "inside-outside" organizing strategy. While activists use protests to build public awareness about anti-trans discrimination, letters, including a letter sent by Gonzalez and Assemblymember Harvey Epstein to NYU Langone on Feb. 6, can apply pressure to members inside organizations.

The statements remind private hospitals that "they do not have the support of elected officials, [and] they do not have the support of the community," Gonzalez said. The letter requested a meeting with NYU Langone and a response by Feb. 17. As *The Indypendent* goes to press on March 13, NYU Langone has not responded to the letter.

Private hospitals rely on what Kinnocan deems an "unholy alliance of public money and private power in the U.S. healthcare system." Hospitals with nonprofit status, like NYU, are required to report their charitable spending to the IRS. (For more, see sidebar.)

Medicaid plus property and sales tax exemptions are just some of the ways New York State funds private hospitals. Private hospitals rely on students trained at public hospitals as well as members of nurses and doctors unions. NYU Langone has been "accused of literally sending people out of its ER and down the street," Kinnucan stated, referencing a 2022 *New York Times* article. "That's a subsidy we [the public] are giving it. We're caring where it doesn't wanna care."

Leveraging these pressure points will require a sustained, strategic response. "The federal government is asking a question of New Yorkers: Who are we willing to give up? And our answer is no one," said mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani on the call.

Hospitals "depend on our tax dollars, our insurance premiums, our labor as caregivers," Kinnucan states. "Who are they accountable to?"

Ken Langone, Home Depot cofounder with a $9.7 billion net worth, donated $200 million to NYU Medical Center in 2008 in an unrestricted gift. Langone donated another $200 million to provide full-tuition scholarships for students at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine in 2018 — the same year he released his memoir, *I Love Capitalism!* Despite donating to Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, the Take Back the House 2020 PAC and republican super-PAC Senate Leadership Fund, Langone reported feeling "betrayed" by Trump after the January 6th attacks.

Listeners on the DSA call commented that providers at Callen-Lorde and Planned Parenthood advised saving up extra hormones in the wake of Trump's executive orders in the event of possible supply disruptions. These claims have not been verified by providers.

On March 3, New York Health + Hospitals Press secretary Stephanie Buhle confirmed in an email to *The Indypendent* that "We continue to provide gender-affirming care, including to patients under 19."

CAN ANDREW CUOMO OUTRUN HIS PAST?

DAVID HOLLENBACH

By John Tarleton

When candidates enter a high-profile political race, they often announce their campaign with a short online video. It's an opportunity to present themselves in the best possible light to voters and highlight the themes they are running on. Most candidates know to keep it short and leave people wanting to hear more.

In this year's mayoral race, City Comptroller Brad Lander's gauzy launch video clocked in at two minutes and four seconds, Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani's battle cry for a more affordable city is one minute and 41 seconds. State Senator Jessica Ramos' paean to progressive governance is one minute and 38 seconds.

And then there's former Gov. Andrew Cuomo. He takes 17 minutes and 27 seconds to celebrate himself. A little over 12 minutes into the video, he briefly adopts a contrite tone and acknowledges he made "mistakes" in the past, promising to do better.

Cuomo never says what he is sort of apologizing for. Is it the thousands of deaths caused by his decision to send COVID-19 patients back to nursing homes at the height of the pandemic? The sexual harassment claims by nearly a dozen women? The pay-to-play scandals that sent some of his closest aides to prison?

Since he can't change his record in office, what has Cuomo done during his years of political exile to show he has turned a new leaf? Here are some quick highlights, or lowlights, if you will:

- *Spent more than $60 million in New York taxpayer money on his legal fees, according to a recent report by the New York state comptroller.*

- *Used the discovery process in a civil lawsuit to demand that one of his accusers, Charlotte Bennett, hand over her gynecological records. Bennett withdrew her claim against Cuomo rather than endure further legal harassment from him.*

- *Sought to dismantle the state ethics commission that has been investigating a $5.1 million book deal Cuomo signed during the pandemic. In a 4–3 split decision, New York's highest court ruled against Cuomo.*

- *Joined the legal team defending Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in November 2024 after the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu for war crimes in Gaza.*

None of this seems to matter to the roughly one-third of registered Democrats who consistently support Cuomo in the polls and have made him the frontrunner in the June 24 Democratic primary, where eight other candidates are each trailing him by 20 points or more.

So what is the source of Cuomo's enduring appeal? For some, it's the memories of the daily press conferences he held during the early months of the pandemic when his reassuring, fatherly tone posed a stark contrast to Trump's unhinged incompetence. For others, it's the notion that he "gets things done." For some older voters, there's the name that he shares with his father, former Gov. Mario Cuomo.

IT'S A NEW YORK THING

Cuomo has mastered the aesthetic of authority, which is a nice way of saying that he is an overhyped product of New York City's political and media culture — just like Donald Trump, Eric Adams and Rudy Giuliani before him. It's a culture that elevates attitude over aptitude and swagger over substance, that substitutes the ability to posture over real achievement. A culture that turns a failed-businessman-turned-grifter into a one-of-a-kind tycoon, a clueless former cop into a mayor, and the failson of a former governor into a model of rational, super-competent leadership even when history suggests otherwise (see page 10).

New York is a city of strivers who pride themselves on shrugging off adversity and pushing forward. The likes of Cuomo, Adams and Trump try to seduce us when they adopt a "New York tough" persona. We pay a high price for welcoming their flattery.

Like Trump, Cuomo is deeply damaged. They are both heirs to family dynasties, one in business and the other in politics. Their fathers were workaholics — powerful, emotionally distant men from mid-20th-century America whose approval they will forever be seeking and whom they are forever seeking to surpass. Like Trump, Cuomo must control everything and everyone in his world. Like Trump, Cuomo's mistakes are always someone else's fault. Like Trump, he has a penchant for victimizing women. And like Trump, he governs with the concerns of the billionaire class foremost in his mind.

Unlike Trump, Cuomo is hard-working and highly intelligent. However, his unwillingness to listen to others has often led to bad outcomes, as we saw with the nursing home scandal.

There are likely hundreds, perhaps thousands, of New Yorkers who voted to re-elect Cuomo in 2018 because of his "experience" and who later died due to his negligence during the pandemic.

CUOMO'S STRATEGY

If his record is poor at best, Cuomo has perfected the art of his own political advancement. As governor, he took Albany corruption to the next level, creating a pay-to-play paradise for the wealthy and the well-connected. Cuomo in turn raised tens of millions of dollars and massively outspend his opponents. He will try to do the same in this race. Other candidates will trek across the city to one civic forum after another to debate each other. Cuomo will seek to dominate the airwaves.

"Andrew Cuomo is running for Eric Adams' second term: the same donors, the same agenda, the same chaos," tweeted Zohran Mamdani, the socialist Assemblymember from Queens whose burgeoning campaign is threatening to emerge as the progressive frontrunner in the race.

The Democratic primary is on June 24. There are many better options out there besides Cuomo. But over these next three months, can New Yorkers resist falling once again for a swaggering leader who doesn't give a damn about them?

TAKE THE CUOMO POP QUIZ

AND CHECK THE ANSWER KEY ON PAGE 13 TO SEE HOW MANY QUESTIONS YOU ANSWERED CORRECTLY

By John Tarleton
Illustrations by Leia Doran

1 EARLY SIGNS
Andrew Cuomo has long been suspected of having been responsible for the anonymous poster titled "Vote For Cuomo, Not The Homo" that appeared on the city streets during the final weeks of the hotly contested 1977 mayoral race between his father Mario Cuomo and Ed Koch, a lifelong bachelor.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

2 NICKNAME
While serving as an advisor to his father Gov. Mario Cuomo, young Andrew Cuomo was dubbed "The Prince of Darkness" for his ruthless ways.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

3 HUD SECRETARY
As the secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the late '90s, Andrew Cuomo helped prevent the subprime mortgage crisis.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

4 PUBLIC SECTOR
Upon becoming governor in 2011, Andrew Cuomo blamed Wall Street for the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent Great Recession, vowing to protect the public sector by making the financial industry pay for the crisis.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

5 DRAWING A LINE
When he ran for governor in 2010, Andrew Cuomo promised to put a nonpartisan commission in charge of legislative redistricting in place of the partisan leaders of the State Assembly and State Senate who traditionally gerrymandered districts to their own advantage.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

6 BYE PARTISAN
When Republicans lost their State Senate majority in 2012, Gov. Cuomo engineered the creation of the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC), a group of four Democratic state senators who caucused with the GOP and kept it in power.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

7 COMMISSION IMPOSSIBLE
In 2013, Gov. Cuomo appointed the Moreland Commission to investigate corruption in the New York State government.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

8 UNOPPOSED?
Since winning the governorship in 2010, Andrew Cuomo has been essentially unchallenged by progressives during his reign as the state's highest elected official.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

9 LADIES MAN
During his 2014 re-election run, Andrew Cuomo was endorsed by the newly formed Women's Equality Party (WEP).
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

10 HE'S GOT A TICKET TO RIDE
In the summer of 2017, as the news broadcast photos of absurdly overpacked subway platforms, Andrew Cuomo apologized for the MTA's poor performance and pledged to expand funding and invest in a 21st-century subway fleet.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

11 READY TO FEAST
Andrew Cuomo's closest aide, Joseph Percoco, was convicted on federal corruption charges and sentenced to six years in prison for taking $300,000 in bribes — money he called "gabagool," in reference to HBO mob drama "The Sopranos."
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

12 BUFFALO BULLION
In July 2018, Alain Kaloyeros, the principal architect of the Buffalo Billion, Gov. Cuomo's economic revitalization plan for Western New York, was found guilty of steering hundreds of millions of dollars in government contracts to a bid-rigging scheme. Executives from the two firms that benefited from Kaloyeros' largesse were significant campaign donors to Gov. Cuomo.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

13 NAMING RIGHTS
While wooing Amazon in 2018, the governor vowed he would rename himself "Amazon Cuomo" if the company opened its second headquarters in Queens.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

14 THE DINNER PARTY
At the height of 2019 budget negotiations, Andrew Cuomo brought his Budget Director Robert Mujica to a $25,000-per-couple dinner with donors.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

15 CUOMO, DE BLASIO & COVID
As concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic grew in February and March of 2020, Gov. Cuomo deferred to Mayor Bill de Blasio on how New York City should respond to the looming threat.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

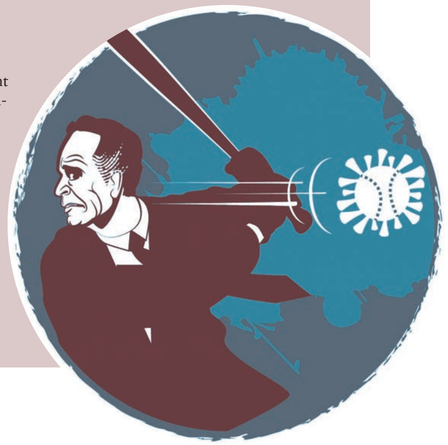
16 HOSPITALS ON LIFE SUPPORT
New York State has lost 20,000 hospital beds over the past 20 years. During Andrew Cuomo's decade in power, he has presided over numerous hospital closures and consolidations.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

17 OUT WITH THE OLD
As the COVID-19 death count soared in March 2020, Andrew Cuomo slipped an item into the state budget granting full legal immunity to nursing home companies and executives for the duration of the pandemic.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

18 SEXUAL HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS
In 2021, 11 women who previously worked for Gov. Cuomo claimed he sexually harassed them.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

19 PICKING UP THE TAB
Since his resignation, Cuomo has spent more than $60 million in New York taxpayer money on his legal fees.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**

20 RESPONDING TO GAZA
When the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in November 2024, Cuomo announced that after much soul-searching, he could no longer support Israel.
❍**TRUE**
❍**FALSE**



WHO WILL CONTROL THE PANAMA CANAL?

PANAMANIANS WARY OF TRUMP'S TAKEOVER TALK

PHOTO: FEDERICO RIOS

GLOBAL TRADE: *Ships crossing the Gatún locks in the Panama Canal.*

By Linda Martín Alcoff

In his congressional address on March 4, Donald Trump reiterated his intention of "reclaiming" the Panama Canal on the grounds that "we built it." He claimed Panama was charging the United States unfair fees and allowing China to run the canal. He stated that Secretary of State Marco Rubio had already forced Panama to end its contracts with the Hong Kong company that was operating two of the ports and that he would "get the canal back."

A few days after Trump first announced his intention to retake the Canal, I called my brother Rafael in Panama City. "How are you doing?" I asked. "I'm tense," he answered. I suspect his mood reflected a more general malaise. Flashbacks of the U.S. military invasion of 1989, memories of obnoxious U.S. troops who ruled over the Canal Zone for nearly a century. The Zone split the country in half and could not always be avoided. And there is worry about what this could mean for the economy of a small country that has finally begun gaining from the profits of the canal.

Panama is smaller than the state of South Carolina with a population of 4.5 million people. It has an extensive shoreline, many mountainous regions that resist cultivation and a mining industry that only accounts for 1% of the country's GDP. In 1513, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa accidentally "discovered" the Pacific Ocean on Panama's western shores while on a mission of plunder but was executed by the Spanish crown for treason just six years later. Panamanians believe the charge of treason was triggered by his marriage to a Native woman, with a wedding conducted in local custom. They erected a statue in his honor and named their coinage "Balboas." But Panamanian Balboas remain so weak and unstable that the country persists in using the U.S. dollar as its official currency.

U.S. relations with Panama have continued this odd amalgam of desire and contempt, plunder and mestizahe, for over a century. Profits from the only canal in this hemisphere were siphoned off by the United States from 1914 until the last day of 1999, when the Canal was "returned" to the country that actually built it, with a little capital and engineering from the U.S. Empire. The thousands who died in its construction, including many immigrant laborers from the West Indies, are given no credit and no acknowledgement when Donald Trump repeats the oft-repeated claims that "we" — meaning the United States — built the canal.

The truth is that when the United States returned the Canal, it was almost obsolete. It could not accommodate an increased amount of traffic. Moreover, many ships today are one-and-a-half times the size of the ships that could pass through the old canal. The government held a national referendum in 2006 and with overwhelming popular support, launched an ambitious project to enlarge the canal and build an entirely new shipping lane. It took over ten years and over $6 billion, but today, the canal can handle new monolithic Panamax ships and military ships as well as the increased global commerce. And now the United States wants it back.

Seventy percent of the ships that pass through the canal either leave from or return to U.S. ports, or both. The management of the canal since 2000 has operated through extensive international treaty agreements to ensure fairness and neutrality in both fees and rights of access. From the shores of the Casco Viejo in Panama City, where my father grew up, one can see the ships lined up for passage like children going to the cafeteria for lunch. No jumping the line is allowed.

U.S. military ships pay a standard fee like everyone else. But Trump wants an end to fees for the United States and the power to disrupt at whim other commercial or military traffic in this hemisphere. This could seriously affect the global economy and its current power balances.

My brother Rafael thinks, as do many others in Panama, that Trump is playing poker. His threats may be aimed at wresting control of the canal for U.S. interests. On March 4, the Trump administration strong-armed a Hong Kong-based conglomerate into selling its interests in ports on both ends of the Canal to BlackRock, a U.S. company.

Trump may also want to undermine Panama's political sovereignty so that the recent shelving of huge copper mining projects, after months of popular opposition, could be reversed and the projects continued. This would displace communities and endanger local environments — all for money that will largely flow out of the country. Just as the Canal profits long did.

Trump has also used his threats to coerce the Panamanian government to take some people deported from the United States, hold them in detention centers and "re-migrate" them to their countries of origin. He is thus expanding the Guantanamo offshore model of torture, but this time with more hands-on collusion by locals.

LAND GRAB

Continued from page 5

and communities by settlers and the Israeli military. It is illegal under multiple international laws.

"I just bought a house in Jenin," one Zionist boasted at the February Borough Park protest. Jews from anywhere in the world who have never spent a day in Palestine [to them, "Israel"] can buy homes in settlements or even move into a previously Palestinian-owned home from which a family was forcefully evicted. Palestinians, though, are barred from returning to their homes once they are expelled from them. And if they flee Palestine, they and their progeny are not allowed to return.

The Feb. 18 protests in Borough Park were denounced as antisemitic by Zionist groups and their political allies. In response, Betar announced a Feb. 26 protest at the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge's mosque on Fifth Avenue in the heart of Little Palestine.

"If they would stop having illegal stolen land sales events hidden in their synagogues and Jewish community centers, we wouldn't be going there protesting. That's the only reason we go there," said Tova, a Jewish organizer with PAL-Awda NY/NJ who also asked to be identified by first name only. "Coming to the Palestinian community to try to attack a mosque in response to this is totally Islamophobic."

The Betar protesters did not show up, likely because a PAL-Awda NY/NJ counter-protest — planned two hours before the Betar action and endorsed by over 30 groups — drew hundreds, including many anti-Zionist Jews.

The Palestinian Assembly for Liberation also has a legal team, the PAL Commission on War Crimes, Justice, Reparations and Return. When a land-sale event is planned, the team serves cease-and-desist letters to groups and individuals including the sponsors of the events, the locations hosting the event and the attorney general. The commission says the events break 22 New York, federal and international laws.

Between the work of the PAL Commission on War Crimes and the protests organized by PAL-Awda NY/NJ, the goal is to thwart the sales from happening. By serving the cease-and-desist orders to event sponsors and hosting locations; notifying them of its plans to protest the events; and publicizing the location of the sales, which can be hard to find, PAL has seen a handful of successes in having the events relocated, moved online, or canceled. The vast majority go on as planned, but protesters show up whenever they can.

This all occurs as more Palestinian land is being illegally taken right now. As *The Indy* goes to press, the Israeli military's "Operation Iron Wall" has displaced over 40,000 Palestinians from the West Bank, largely emptying the Faraa, Jenin, Nur Shams and Tulkarem refugee camps. This is the largest mass displacement since the 1967 war. Displaced Palestinians are being told they will not be able to return to their homes.

Back in New York, Mohamed says protesting the land sales is the most critical action to take in support of Palestinian rights right now: "We're literally trying to prevent settlers from North America, from New York City from going to Palestine and stealing our land and our homes. You see the reaction from these Zionist protesters because they know what a powerful campaign it is. These sales are there to ethnically displace people and help carry out a slow genocide in the West Bank."

POP QUIZ ANSWERS

FOR YOUR FINAL GRADE, MULTIPLY THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS YOU ANSWERED CORRECTLY BY 5.

1. TRUE: *Koch won despite the smear, but lost to Papa Cuomo five years later when they both ran for governor.*

2. TRUE: *Andrew's shadowy deeds to punish his father's enemies and keep his supporters in line were so devilish that Albany insiders came up with "The Prince of Darkness" as his moniker. Andrew is reputed to be proud of his unofficial title.*

3. FALSE: *As HUD secretary, Cuomo helped sow the seeds of the subprime mortgage crisis of 2007–08 by pushing government-sponsored entities Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to get into the subprime housing market while capitulating to mortgage-industry players who didn't want to disclose the terms of the mortgages they were making.*

4. FALSE: *Cuomo relentlessly scapegoated public sector workers for the state's post-meltdown fiscal crisis. Rather than levy penalties or taxes on Wall Street, he overcame union opposition and convinced legislators to cut pension benefits for future state employees instead.*

5. TRUE: *However, when Cuomo actually became governor, he scrapped that promise to win legislative support for cutting public sector pensions.*

6. TRUE: *Cuomo liked this arrangement because it meant bills passed by the Democratic-controlled Assembly would die in the Senate without Cuomo being blamed by progressive voters. The IDC grew to include eight Democratic senators. It was swept away in the 2018 midterms when enraged Democratic voters got wind of the scheme, and threw the turncoats out of office.*

7. TRUE: *The Moreland Commission was always meant to focus on the corruption of Cuomo's rivals, though, not his own administration. When the commission turned its attention to Cuomo's cronies, he promptly killed it.*

8. FALSE: *In 2014, anti-corruption author and attorney Zephyr Teachout ran against Cuomo in the Democratic primary and won 34% of the vote and half the counties in the state, despite being massively outspent. Cynthia Nixon garnered 35% of the vote when she primaried Cuomo in 2018.*

9. TRUE: *Cuomo created the WEP as a sham third party to sow confusion among supporters of the left-leaning Working Families Party (WFP).*

10. FALSE: *Gov. Cuomo denied he was responsible for the MTA's poor performance even though he appoints the majority of its board, including its chair. In fact, it was the governor's repeated raids on MTA funding sources that led to the subway system's unraveling.*

11. FALSE: *Although Percoco did take those bribes from two companies with state business in return for taking official actions to benefit the firms, and he was convicted and sent to prison, he called the money "ziti," just like Tony Soprano would.*

12. TRUE: *And sadly the $959 million solar panel factory that was central to the project has been a dud.*

13. TRUE: *He also generously offered enticements including $3 billion in public subsidies and a private helipad for CEO Jeff Bezos paid for with taxpayer dollars.*

14. TRUE: *When three young female legislators – Alessandra Biaggi, Jessica Ramos and Yuh-Line Niou – criticized this action, a top Cuomo aide denounced them as "fucking idiots."*

15. FALSE: *Cuomo initially downplayed COVID-19 as no more dangerous than the flu. By late February, the State Department of Health ceased communicating with the NYC Department of Health. When de Blasio tried to shut down the city on March 17, Cuomo overrode him but then reversed course and locked down the city on March 22, after thousands more people were infected.*

16. TRUE: *The shortage of hospital beds would come back to haunt Cuomo at the peak of the pandemic when ailing New Yorkers flooded safety-net hospitals that didn't have beds for them.*

17. TRUE: *Cuomo required nursing homes to accept COVID-infected patients from hospitals, leading to thousands of preventable deaths. The nursing home industry and the Greater Hospital Association of New York are both major Cuomo campaign donors.*

18. TRUE: *Cuomo initially denied his 11 accusers' allegations of inappropriate touching, forced kissing and making sexually-charged comments in their presence. In a last-ditch bid to save his governorship, Cuomo allowed that he may have unintentionally erred due to being too old-fashioned in his understanding of what is considered acceptable behavior. He now insists the accusations were all a sham and that he is the victim.*

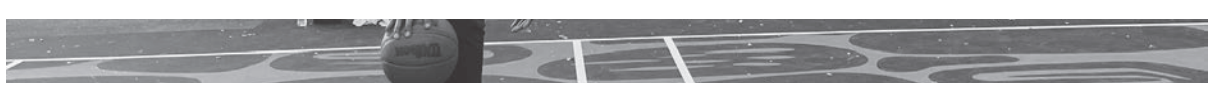
19. TRUE: *Cuomo has run up more than $60 million in legal fees since leaving office, according to a recent report by the New York State Comptroller. Much of that has been for litigation related to the sexual harassment claims against him.*

20. FALSE: *Cuomo responded to the ICC charges against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu by joining a high-powered legal defense team for Netanyahu led by Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz.*

MY GRADE IS_____.

RUCKER

FROM STREETBALL JEWEL TO NATIONAL TREASURE



By Janavi Kumar

Four missed shots, and the freshly collected snow on the rim has been nearly rattled off altogether. Groans and screams from the two-person crowd, one recording on a phone, another with hands tangled in hair like this is Game 7 and not just another day at Rucker Park. The boy handling the ball opts for a simple chuck from the free-throw line, and finally it falls clear through the netting with a *shwoop*, the snow undisturbed.

Cheers, laughter, and some very choice words from the teenage crowd. Flexed muscles from the star of the show. A celebratory layup after a sweet, silly game of Don't Mess Up The Snow on a cold morning at the local basketball court.

Rucker Park sits on the border of the Harlem and Washington Heights neighborhoods, tucked neatly beneath the Macombs-Dam Bridge that connects Manhattan to the Bronx. Directly to its west are two NYCHA public housing complexes, the Polo Grounds Towers and the Rangel Houses; to its east, the Harlem River.

A New York cornerstone, the park — which consists of a field, a tennis wall, and a playground where children chase each other around a large, climbable whale — is more than a neighborhood haven: it's also home to what is considered the most famous streetball court in America and quite possibly the world. It's so renowned that in September, Rep. Adriano Espaillat announced that the House had passed a bill that he introduced to get the park federally enshrined as a national commemorative site. Two weeks before Donald Trump's inauguration, Biden signed the bill into law.

Designation as a national commemorative site can protect a site's culture, legacy and future by placing it under federal National Park Service jurisdiction. Espaillat's bill allows for federal funding at the discretion of the secretary of the interior, who can collaborate with the mayor and New York City Parks to sponsor exhibits, installations and other educational initiatives at Rucker Park.

In the dead of winter, fewer sneakers are heard squeaking on the asphalt, but on any average day in the spring, summer or fall, Rucker Park is filled with everyone from basketball players to fashion photographers. Most park-goers arrive separately but easily fall into a rhythm, all knowing their part in the elaborate dance of sharing space. Pick-up games are wordlessly assembled, joints shared between strangers. One day in late September, I watched as players avoided the half-court circle where a girl in a matching two-piece set posed for photographers with a bottle of Espolòn between her feet.

"Hi, nephew!" a middle-aged woman called out from behind the fence, and a player dropped the ball to enthusiastically wave back to her. The two-on-three game he was in had become steadily more raucous and sweaty. His teammate smacked him on the head for his lapse before turning around and repeating sincerely, "Hi, auntie." The players were imposing, and their tangled chorus of voices was at once crass and supportive.

On the side of the court opposite the two-on-three game, where no one yelled obscenities, was a little boy, likely just finished with his day at a nearby elementary school. For several minutes, he ran to and from the three-point line, threading the ball between his legs mid-air before bouncing it off the backboard. He lifted his head only to turn and watch the melee of larger bodies across the court. After a few minutes, he walked over to them, bouncing his ball until he was noticed. His head, still bowed, was level with the other players' waists.

"You wanna play, little man?" Ten minutes later, the boy

PARK

still had barely spoken, but one of his opponents had seen enough. The team the boy had joined had rapidly gained traction — maybe because of his shiftiness, but more likely because his opponents couldn't mow him over.

One man looked over at the bleachers to joke, "We're getting cooked!"

■ ■ ■

Fall days at Rucker Park saw many games like this — locals with baby teeth and those with years of basketball training alike shooting hoops before the cold settled in. They were days made possible by the actions of one New York City Parks Department's playground directors, Holcombe Rucker. Rucker designed the park, which initially opened as PS 156 Playground in 1956, in an effort to urge neighborhood kids to stay off the street and on a path to college. In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park "at the request of Rucker's protégés," according to the Parks Department. PS 156 closed in 1981, but the park lived on.

Rucker brought his favorite motto, "each one; teach one," to life through his summertime Rucker Tournament, ultimately helping around 700 children acquire collegiate athletic scholarships. Rucker continued his own education, obtaining a degree in 1962 from the City College of New York. He spent the rest of his life teaching English at an all-boys junior high school in Harlem before dying from cancer in 1965 at the age of 39.

After its inception, Rucker Tournament constantly eclipsed itself, quickly morphing into a community event where increasingly skilled players showed off, dunking and crossover dribbling. There was a flamboyance to the play that the professional leagues of the 1950s and '60s would have seriously frowned upon. The NBA of today arguably looks a lot like old-school Rucker Park.

Thanks to Mr. Rucker and a rapper named Greg Marius, who in 1982 began to invite hip-hop crew members and other prominent basketball players to play there, the park turned into a small center of the basketball world every summer.

The park's famed tournaments attract everyone from politicians to rappers to NBA players, with stars from Earl Manigault to Kobe Bryant to Kevin Durant taking on the crowd in years past. The rich and famous, accustomed to courtside seats in Madison Square Garden, get patted down by security guards and crammed in the bleachers side-by-side with hundreds of New Yorkers.

■ ■ ■

An old man rattled off names to me in those same bleachers as we watched the little boy pant and windmill his arms around the other players. The man ended his catalog emphatically with "Wilt Chamberlain!" before bellowing encouragement to the little boy, who missed. Not everyone can be Wilt the Stilt, but Rucker Park continues to be a training ground for the streetballer.

Sports journalist Scoop Jackson says that Holcombe Rucker's impact on the game of basketball deserves more than just federal enshrinement for his park. "All of these city all-star games, all of the NBA summer leagues you see everywhere," Jackson told *The Indypendent*, "[Rucker] was the one who started all that! He single-handedly turned the game of basketball into a year-long sport."

Indeed, even when passersby are donning sweatpants and puffy jackets, Rucker Park still manages to draw a crowd from near and far.

"It's very famous, even in Japan," Toma, a visiting 22-year-old medical student from Kyoto, said, wiping his brow. Toma grew up playing basketball, and Rucker Park made it to his New York City solo trip itinerary this past October, along with a Knicks game at Madison Square Garden and, of course, a trip to Times Square.

BASKETBALL MECCA: *Local youths play ball at Holcombe Rucker Park, located on the border of Harlem and Washington Heights.*

Kam, a 24-year-old cut-and-sew designer who embodies Rucker Park's competitive-meets-compassionate energy, lay down on the bleachers after playing with Toma. Kam, who now lives in North Jersey, doesn't frequent the park too often during his visits home but said it was an outlet and an escape from all the noise during his childhood. "I feel like when you're out here, you try to make a quick statement for yourself, you feel me? If I'm playing anything, anywhere, ever, I don't ever want to lose. I gotta do my shimmy, do my move, get my spot. It's not that deep, but it is at the same time," he laughed.

Whether a simple childhood escape or summertime mecca, Rucker Park belongs to its neighborhood. Keeping it this way is proving challenging, with over two decades of continuous gentrification and increasing house prices threatening to push out many longtime residents. According to the 2023 American Community Survey, over 50% of the park's surrounding area identifies as Black or Hispanic/Latino. In the 1950s, when Holcombe Rucker started his tournaments, the Central Harlem neighborhood that sits directly to the south of the park was over 98% Black.

Regarding community, Scoop Jackson notes that Holcombe Rucker's name is often followed up with mention of the scholarships he provided for local players. But Jackson is quick to challenge that the scholarships or even the stars of Rucker Park should be the sole focus. "What about the kids who don't get scholarships? It's the joy; it's the freedom; it's what [the park] has done to the game of basketball. When kids walk out of their tenements and look at Rucker Park, they know what it means to have something like that in their neighborhood."

Given the park's historical and cultural impact on both New York City and the sport of basketball, the plaque that will enshrine it — a symbolic gesture to the community surrounding it — is long overdue.

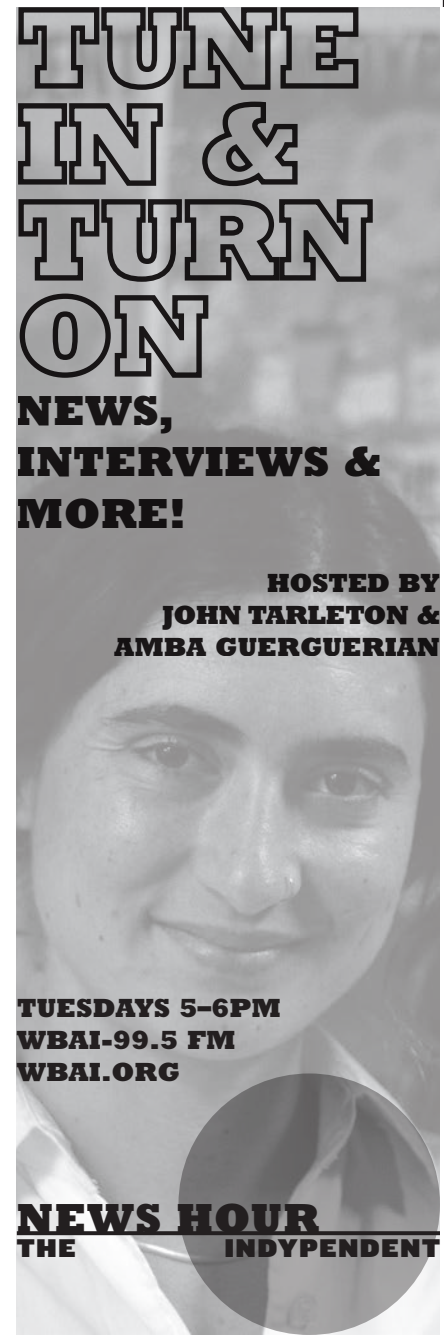
"It's meaningful for sure," said Kam, "especially for the people who grew up here … But how can we know it'll be protected? It'll never be the people's as much as we want it to be." Yes, the park is now a national commemorative site, Kam acknowledged, "but if the places around us change, and they will, the people who built it won't be around anymore, you feel me?"

■ ■ ■

Back on the basketball court that fall day, the little boy's thin chest rose and fell rapidly under his baggy sweatshirt. His play had worsened. Another player called for a break. The players sat on the bleachers, panting, checking phones, making small talk.

When play resumed, the boy, our future Wilt Chamberlain, relaxed some. He celebrated a teammate's basket with a big smile and a few dance moves. At the end of the game, he dapped everyone up before heading to the fence gate and strapping on a backpack nearly the size of his own body.

At the gate, he turned around and waved goodbye before heading off down the street, his blue backpack becoming smaller and smaller before it disappeared into the Harlem afternoon.



INDY NEWSLETTER

SIGN UP AT INDYPENDENT.ORG AND HAVE ALL OUR LATEST COVERAGE DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX

HIS CAMERA DIDN'T FLINCH

Weegee: Society of the Spectacle
Thru May 5
International Center of Photography

By Huey Tarpon

It takes two to Ouija, at least the way I played the spiritualist parlor game growing up. Each person places a hand on the planchette and lets it be their guide. Of course, one hand is actually directing the pointer in the process of divination. The other participates only in so far as it submits to the message.

Spectacle functions in much the same way. There's no show without an audience and, in a consumerist society, it's expected to be a passive one.

Enter Weegee, née Usher Fellig, with a cigar smoldering in his mouth and a flashbulb-mounted Speed Graphic camera in his hands at the dawn of what French theorist Guy Debord and his fellow Situationists would later term the "society of the spectacle," our current epoch, where commodities, in the form of advertising and mass media, cast a shroud over all aspects of lived experience.

The son of Ukrainian immigrants who settled in Brooklyn in 1909 when he was 10, Weegee went from taking souvenir photographs of children atop his pony (according to his autobiography) to working in the darkroom at *The New York Times* to capturing some of the 20th century's most iconic images as a freelance photojournalist in the 1930s and '40s when nine daily newspapers competed for New Yorkers' attention.

Car wrecks, burning buildings, perp walks, circus performers, slum dwellers and dead gangsters are cast in stark relief through Weegee's lens. A consummate showman himself, he was dubbed, or more likely dubbed himself, Weegee for his uncanny ability to be the first among the press to arrive at any given crime scene, a feat he accomplished by keeping an obsessive ear to a police radio.

In *Weegee: Society of the Spectacle*, currently on view at the International Center of Photography, you get plenty of detectives in porkpie hats and trenchcoats standing over corpses who were murdered in cold blood, but you also get shots of bystanders rubbernecking from fire escapes, rooftops and from behind police barricades to get a better view the carnage. Just as it takes two to Ouija, it takes two to Weegee, and the man was fond of turning his camera on spectators, revealing the audience to itself.

Take for instance, "Their First Murder," which shows a group of children, some gleefully, some greedily, jostling for a glimpse of a cadaver. A grief-stricken relative of the victim, surrounded by the insatiable runts, weeps in the center of the photograph.

In his classic *Naked City* — later the basis for a film, followed by a television series — Weegee captioned the photo, "A woman relative cried … but neighborhood dead-end kids enjoyed the show when a small-time racketeer was shot and killed." On the facing page of the book, an instant success when it was published in 1945, there's a photo of said racketeer, lying in a gutter in a pool of blood with a DOA (dead on arrival) tag tied to his wrist.

Weegee was also fond of photographing moviegoers enraptured, and occasionally necking, in those dark chambers of dreams that served as America's principal source of spectacle before the proliferation of television sets. Something Debord wrote in the 1960s comes to mind looking at these photographs:

***On the Spot,* December 9, 1939**

[Anthony Esposito, booked on suspicion of killing a policeman, New York], January 16, 1941

***St. Louis Gag Shot,* 1950**

[Mrs. Bernice Lythcott and son looking through window shattered by rock-throwing hoodlums, Harlem, New York], October 18, 1943

"When the real world is transformed into mere images, mere images become real beings — dynamic figments that provide the direct motivations for a hypnotic behavior. Since the spectacle's job is to use various specialized mediations in order to show us a world that can no longer be directly grasped, it naturally elevates the sense of sight to the special preeminence once occupied by touch."

Sight, after all, is the "most abstract and easily deceived sense."

Weegee himself described operating under a kind of hypnotic state while he was on the job, not truly grasping just what he was witnessing until he developed his photos, which he often did on the fly from a portable darkroom installed in the trunk of his '38 Chevrolet. You'll get a glimpse of the man, a prodigious self-mythologizer, at work at this mobile set up at the ICP exhibition, along with a self-portrait of Weegee with his Speed Graphic and ubiquitous cigar. There's also one with him on a cot in the almost monastic chambers he lived in near One Police Plaza where he could be close to the action.

For all his legendary intuition, the photograph Weegee considered his personal favorite is one he staged. The 1943 image features an aged Bowery performer whom he invited to join him at the Metropolitan Opera and identified in the title as the "Critic," greeting, mouth agape, a pair of fur-clad, bejeweled women as they arrive at opening night. High and low society meet and the results are spectacularly absurd.

The photographer treated America's class schisms in the same high-contrast light with which he depicted sex and violence. At the ICP showing, we see an old ragman pulling his rented mare through the snow. In Weegee's frontal portrait, it is as if viewers have startled him in the dead of night. And we see children amid a heatwave sleeping on the fire escapes of the Lower East Side, the neighborhood where Weegee took many of his most iconic images and where this current exhibition takes place.

Weegee's oeuvre is often divided into two categories: his Gotham years and the time he spent later in life in Hollywood, where he produced numerous parody photographs of celebrities ("spectacular representations of living human beings," in the words of Debord), using trick lenses that he invented himself. The exhibition seeks to do away with this distinction between the two Weegees, with the throughline being Weegee's obsession with spectacle.

At first, these later photographs appear as mere caricature work, like something the illustrator Al Hirschfeld might have produced, or worse, something you might pay a guy ten bucks to draw for you on the Coney Island boardwalk. But on further consideration, Weegee's renderings of figures revered for their beauty, glamour and statesmanship into grotesque distortions of themselves is some of his most subversive work, as it undermines the godly pedestal upon which the celebrity is elevated.

Weegee: Society of the Spectacle arrives at a moment when a vaunted product of the New York tabloids has gotten himself elected president for a second time via a meme-obsessed MAGA movement that measures truth by its convenience to their cause. If only Weegee were around today to document the monstrous madness of it all.

Photographers at Premiere, ca. 1951

[Lovers at the movies, New York] ca. 1943

[Clothing salesman, Easter Sunday, Harlem, New York] ca. 1940

[Marilyn Monroe distortion], ca. 1962

Theater for the New City

MARCH/ APRIL EVENTS

FOG AND FILTHY AIR
by Tom Diriwachter
MARCH 6- MARCH 23
THURS. to SAT. @8PM,
SUN @3PM

LISTS OF PROMISES
by Idiko Nemeth and Lisa Giobbi
MARCH 13- MARCH 30
THURS. to SAT. @8PM,
SUN @3PM

REMEMBRANCE
by Pat Goodson
MARCH 20- APRIL 6
THURS. to SAT. @8PM,
SUN @3PM

SCAMMED INTO LOVE
by Briana Bartenieff
APRIL 3- APRIL 20
THURS. to SAT. @8PM,
SUN @3PM

Alison Cook Beatty Dance: An Evening of Modern Dance
APRIL 4- APRIL 5
FRI. & SAT. @8PM,

CAFE RESISTANCE
by Roberto Monticello
APRIL 10- APRIL 27
THURS. to SAT. @8PM,
SUN @3PM

CAFE RESISTANCE
by Roberto Monticello
APRIL 10- APRIL 27
THURS. to SAT. @8PM,
SUN @3PM

THE ROAD AHEAD
by Barbara Khan
APRIL 10- APRIL 27
THURS. to SAT. @8PM,
SUN @3PM

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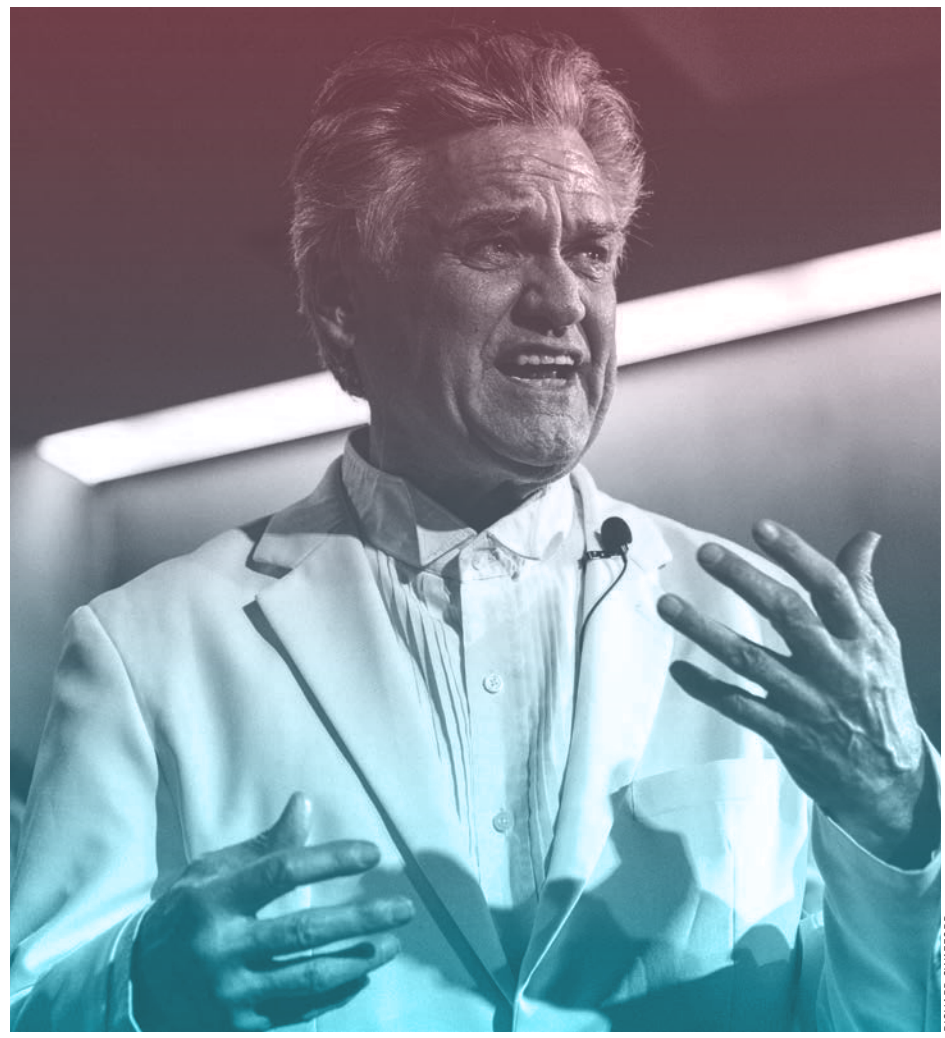
theaterforthenewcity.net

THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY

REVEREND BILLY'S REVELATIONS



RICHARD SWAFFORD

Dear Rev
There is a feeling that none of this is real. Is Trump really president? Can Musk fire thousands? Will ICE go into homes and seize people? I just don't believe it.

— DONNA

Dear Donna,
What *is* happening? I think we all share the unreality creep you are describing. If we get tough with the fascists and confront them with a functioning justice system, well — what will we return to? We will then believe that we know what happened — liberal democracy was overtaken temporarily by a strongman gangster. And that would be a lie. To come up with a description of what *is* happening now, we need to unravel this terrifying riddle: What kind of life have we been living?

If we beat the fascists, what will we return to? Before Trump descended the gold-plated escalator, we lived in saturation advertising that sold an economy based on toxic waste. We lived in sentimental patriotism with eagles and drums that covered up a militarized empire. We lived in a deadly mix of fundamentalist belief systems that pretended to have tickets to heaven and hell.

We have been living in a cyclotron of lies, yes, but more than that, we are kept removed from actual experience. Our popular products are portable entertainments. We are so weightless. So many of us are hypnotized so much of the time that it's surprising Trump didn't happen sooner — or did he? We thought he was a special-effects-concocted supervillain, that he would just go away when the popcorn ran out.

The ultimate product of a consumer society is to repeatedly prove that the system itself is not a product. We would never admit that our presidents have been products and that our political parties are retail giants like Walmart and Amazon. We don't want to believe that even our love lives are strategically targeted profit centers.

In that system, life itself is a targeted profit center. In that system, which we are so afraid is now being stolen, the planet Earth itself is one great profit center, good for extraction, real estate and recreation. The record-breaking heat of the last 30 months seems to be a statement from the Earth that we will not be allowed to return from fascism to the old lies. When the Earth ceases to support our life, will that also be unreal to us?

Stop Shopping!
BILLY

REVEREND BILLY TALEN IS THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF STOP SHOPPING. HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE REVEREND? EMAIL REVBILLY@REVBILLY.COM AND UNBURDEN YOUR SOUL.

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SELF-HELP FOR RANDY RADICALS

*Love In A F*ucked-Up World: How To Build Relationships, Hook Up, And Raise Hell Together*
By Dean Spade
Algonquin Books, January 2025
352 pages

By Jessica Max Stein

In these fascist times, you may find yourself craving community, but wary of repeating unhealthy patterns in your dating life, friendship circles and activist groups. Thank goodness for Dean Spade's new book, *Love in a Fucked-Up World: How to Build Relationships, Hook Up, and Raise Hell Together.*

Spade has been an activist and author for 20-plus years, most notably founding the Sylvia Rivera Law Project for trans advocacy. He approaches the supposedly apolitical genre of self-help with a wry humor, explicitly connecting this book to the questions of his earlier work: How do we build lasting and effective resistance movements? What are the barriers impeding our movements, and how do we overcome them? It's trite but true: the personal is political.

This being a self-help book, most of the answers he prescribes involve work you do on and with yourself. For example, Spade asks the reader to interrogate the cultural scripts that influence our reactions and behavior. He especially despises "the romance myth," as seen in fairy tales and rom-coms: all you have to do is find your Person and you will live happily ever after. This myth elevates one relationship over all others, diminishing the importance of friends and comrades. Spade exhorts people to seek "abundant support" from a variety of sources, as opposed to merely a few major relationships.

Spade encourages the reader to build emotional awareness, noticing when we are on autopilot. He rightly observes that in this oppressive culture, it's radical to be present. He suggests that readers pay attention to our common reactions and patterns of behavior, writing them down and preparing for them ahead of time, a strategy adapted from mental health radicals at the Icarus Project.

The book is particularly strong when it talks about dealing with conflict. Instead of fearing and avoiding conflict, Spade posits, what if we expected it as a regular part of building relationships and doing work with other humans? He points out that people often approach conflict from one of two extreme poles: either we minimize the harm and blame the victim, or we seek "punishment, retaliation, revenge, exile," demonizing the one who has done harm. Canceling people, he astutely implies, stems from capitalism's "disposability culture": if one relationship ends, we can easily replace it, like breaking a plastic toy and running to Amazon for another.

What about a middle ground: accountability? As with emotions, it's radical to face conflict and to try to work through it despite potential discomfort. Spade provides tangible advice to that end, writing adeptly on how to listen and be heard, how to sincerely apologize and forgive, and how to communicate nonviolently.

Much of Spade's advice on conflict, however, is predicated on trusting people's good intentions. I love his optimism on human nature, and his reminder to move away from pigeonholing people as either "good" or "bad," but I wanted more advice on what to do when all parties involved in a conflict don't necessarily mean well. For example, while Spade warns against gossip or "campaigning" against people, what if the person truly did harm and may harm others who need to be warned? And while we won't all agree on how we experienced a situation, what if someone is outright gaslighting? Not everyone can be held accountable, especially if they don't want to be.

Though theoretical, the book is a smooth read, with illustrative anecdotes throughout. Each chapter starts with an overview and ends with a recap, and contains questions and exercises for the reader, a nicely interactive experience. Spade is also skilled at anticipating the reader's questions and counterarguments (he is a lawyer, after all).

If you're familiar with traditional self-help, therapy-speak, or 12-step programs, some of Spade's advice may sound familiar; but that doesn't make it any less valuable, and it's refreshing to see conventional self-help nuggets reframed in a radical context.

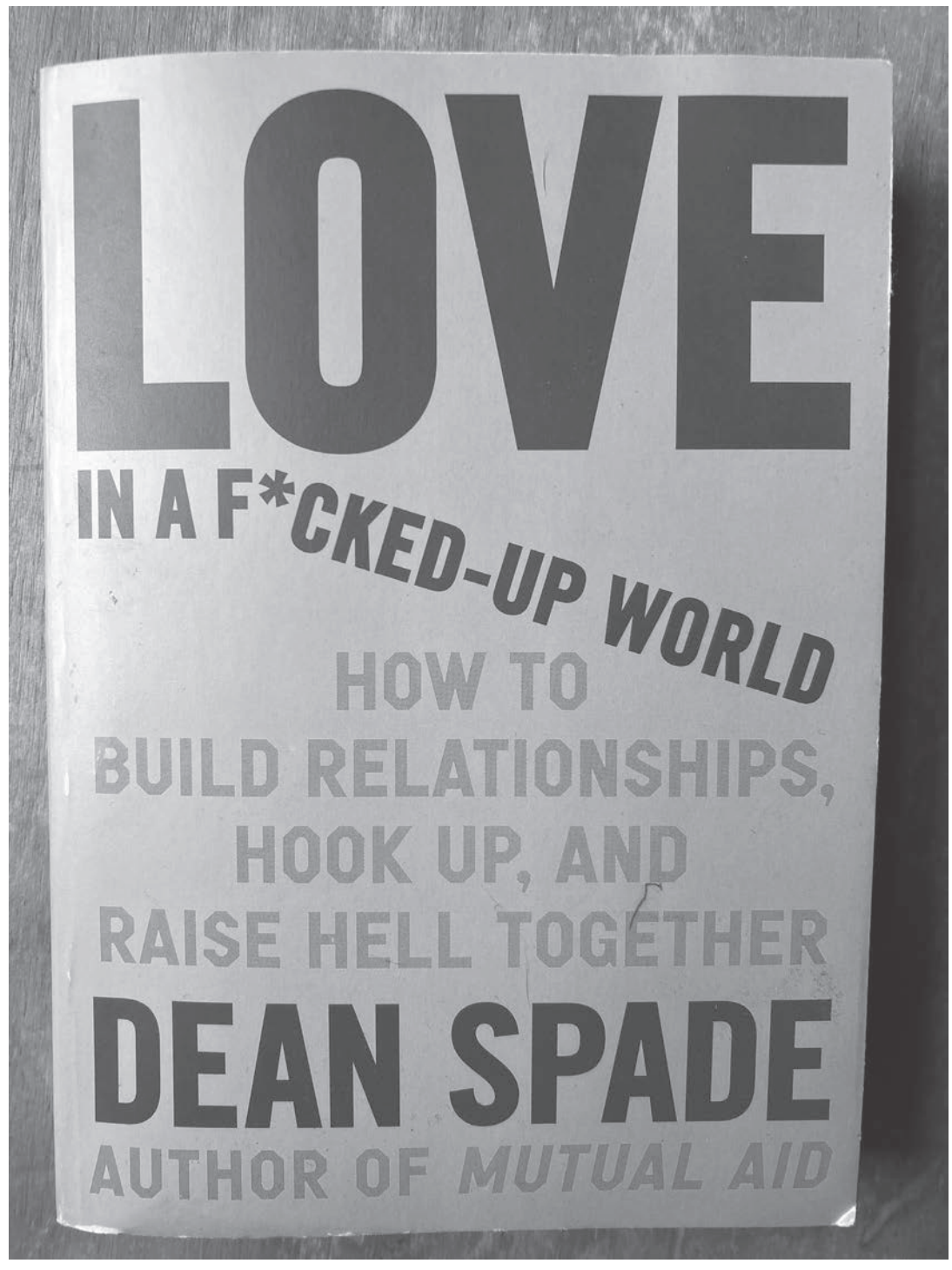
Sometimes, however, Spade takes this reframing a bit too far. In a book that criticizes "pendulum" thinking, the author does it too: The "romance myth" may be toxic, but coupling off doesn't necessarily preclude community. I say this as someone who argued in this very newspaper against the privileging of marriage equality over other LGBTQ+ issues. While I agree that we all need wider networks of connection, and we need to take our friends and comrades as seriously as we do our lovers, Spade risks alienating some readers when he prescribes "revolutionary promiscuity." He may say that one kind of relationship isn't "politically superior" to another, but he doesn't seem to believe it.

The book also sometimes hits up against the limits of the self-help genre: as much as Spade exhorts the reader to bring this individual emotional work into our relationships and especially our activist groups, he could provide more models of how to do so.

But the individual work alone is worth the read. For it's true: if we do this work on ourselves, our relationships with others will benefit and be healthier for it. To connect meaningfully with others, first we need to be grounded in ourselves, to be able to meet those needs for which we so often turn to others. How can we expect others to listen to us, for example, if we don't hear ourselves? How can we set boundaries with others if we don't know our own limits? How can we teach others to help care for us if we don't know what caring best looks like?

Spade wisely reminds readers that "true safety and security" comes not from hierarchies like prisons or the police, but from collaboration and mutual aid. We build this safety with each other, but paradoxically only when we accept that conflict is inevitable, people aren't perfect, and change is the only reliable constant.

And indeed this new regime, too, will change — and by doing this work on ourselves and bringing it to our activism, hopefully we can do more to move things along in the right direction, strengthening ourselves, our relationships, and our communities as we do so.



CALENDAR

WAVE HILL

MARCH/APRIL

ANYTIME • EVENINGS • TIP PERFORMERS
LIVE JAZZ & COMEDY: BAR BAYEAUX
Drinks and sloppy Joes in an old-fashioned haunt offering live jazz music every night except Mondays. Music 8 p.m. to late and comedy every Sunday at 8:30 p.m. Go to barbayeux.com for more.
BAR BAYEAUX
1066 Nostrand Ave
BKLYN

SAT MARCH 23 • 5PM–8:30PM • $30
RAGINI FESTIVAL: INDO-CONSTELLATIONS
Ragini Festival comes to Queens through a partnership with Flushing Town Hall in celebration of contemporary Indo-Caribbean sounds. Indo-Constellations features pop mixed with strains of Indian classical music and celebrates contemporary Indo-Caribbean music through a series of captivating sets that blend Bollywood classics, island rhythms, and Indo-Afro-Trinidadian beats, culminating in a dynamic percussive mashup reflecting island culture with all its diasporic echoes and conversations that unite and honor shared histories.
FLUSHING TOWN HALL
137-35 Northern Blvd
QUEENS

SUN MARCH 30 • 1PM
DEMONSTRATION: LAND DAY
Since 1976, Land Day has been commemorated by the Palestinian people in Palestine and the diaspora to sustain the struggle for all Palestinians to remain in and return to historic Palestine. This year Land Day comes as Trump threatens to 'take Gaza' and as the Zionist displacement campaign escalates in the West Bank. Join the Palestinian Youth Movement and the Shut it Down for Palestine Coalition in the streets to assert the right of every Palestinian to remain and return to Palestine!
UNION SQUARE
MNHTN

SUN MARCH 30 • 4PM–6PM • DONATION REQUIRED
WORKSHOP: "AUTONOMIES FROM BELOW AND TO THE LEFT"
In "Autonomies From Below and To The Left," the presenters will look at what place-based autonomy means, how peoples or pueblos use it to preserve and protect life, and what lessons we can draw for our own liberation. All proceeds from this workshop will go to the @thesameerproject a Palestinian-led mutual aid group that is providing food, water, shelter, and medical care to hundreds of people in Gaza every day. Register at workshops4gaza.com/workshops to attend the event online. In-person registration is limited to 40 – first come first serve!
PROPERTY IS THEFT
411 South Fifth St
BKLYN

THU APRIL 3 • 7PM–9PM • GENERAL ADMISSION $15/REDUCED PRICE $7
CONTEMPLATION: JAZZMEN IN THE WILDERNESS – "MADE IN HARLEM: CINEMA BLUES"
In this selection of ruminative shorts, American jazzmen seek their place abroad, be it a new home or an ancestral one. Ben Webster idles in Amsterdam, Tony Williams communes with drummers and his forebears in Dakar, and a saintly Bud Powell floats through Copenhagen.
MAYSLES DOCUMENTARY CENTER
343 Malcolm X Blvd
MNHTN

APRIL 4–20 • VARIOUS SHOWTIMES • GENERAL ADMISSION $35/STUDENT & SENIOR TICKETS $22
THEATER: DOMINO EFFECT
On a warm summer night in Washington Heights, four generations of New Yorkers find themselves at a domino table, each with something to prove. In a world pulling them apart, will the game be their bridge – or their breaking point? The game itself becomes the unexpected bridge between generations, delving into themes of family, authenticity, and the intrinsic need to forge new connections across diverse, queer generations of immigrants. Presented by People's Theatre Project, LatinX Playwrights Circle and Boundless Theatre Company. Written by Marco Antonio Rodriguez; directed by Mino Lora. Go to thepeoplestheatre.org for more info and to purchase tickets.
JEFFREY & PAULA GURAL THEATRE; A.R.T./NEW YORK THEATRES
502 West 53rd St
MNHTN

APRIL 10–27 • THU, FRI, SAT 8PM, SUN 3PM • STUDENTS $20/SENIORS $15
THEATER: CAFÉ RESISTANCE
Set in Nazi-occupied Paris, Café Resistance tells the story of the Blue Parrot, a cabaret that becomes a sanctuary for Jews and resistance fighters. The women who work there – local and foreign – use their performances to hide their true identities and resist the Nazi regime. Inspired by real events, this gripping play highlights the power of defiance in the face of oppression. Written by Roberto Monticello; directed by Lissa Moira. Go to theaterforthenewcity.net/shows/cafe-resistance/ for tickets and more.
THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY
155 First Ave
MNHTN

SUN APRIL 13 • 9:30AM–11AM • $17
SPRING BIRDING
Welcome migratory birds back to Wave Hill Public Garden and Cultural Center this spring! Explore the gardens and woodlands with birder Gabriel Willow to look for resident and rare birds as they pass through on their northern journey or settle down for the season. A limited number of binoculars, monoculars and walking sticks are available to borrow at the Perkins Visitor Center. Ages 10 and older are welcome with an adult. Advanced registration online is encouraged. Visit www.wavehill.org/calendar/spring-birding-2025-2 or call (718) 549-3200 x251.
WAVE HILL
4900 Independence Ave
BRONX

SAT APRIL 19 • 10AM–3PM • FREE
EARTH DAY IN HARLEM
Harlem Grown's Earth Day Festival welcomes community members back to the farm as a new growing season begins to celebrate Earth Day and enjoy family-friendly activities. Focusing on sustainability and renewal, last year's Earth Day Festival included activities such as papier-mâché arts and crafts, nutritious cooking demonstrations with mushrooms and kale grown on our farms, music and dance, and more. Go to harlemgrown.org for more information. (Rain date: April 20.)
HARLEM GROWN'S 134TH ST FARM
116 W 134th St
MNHTN

SPRING IS COMING: *Visit Wave Hill in the NW Bronx, where rare birds pass through on their northern journey or settle down for the season.*

SAT APRIL 19 • 2PM–7PM • SINGLE $10/FAMILY OF FOUR $20
HOUSE MUSIC FOR EVERYONE
Let's Dance Brooklyn – NYC's favorite all-ages party – is an authentic New York City dance experience for the entire family. Come dance to some of NYC's best DJs on Nowadays' custom-built analog sound system. This season, Resident Ali Coleman will continue showcasing the city's emerging DJ talent. Expect great vibes, a full bar with both adult and kid-friendly drinks, and authentic Mexican food from The Zumbador! Go to ra.co/events/2112423 for tickets and more info.
NOWADAYS
56-06 Cooper Ave
QUEENS

WED MAY 1
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY
Happy May Day! Protest everywhere. Stay tuned for protest updates and coverage of May Day on Indypendent Twitter and Instagram. Also check in with your favorite orgs to see what they might be up to! Each year there are multiple protests in the city organized by labor and immigrant rights groups.